

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
JUVENILE RANCH FACILITY INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in 2009

Facility Name: JUVENILE RANCH FACILITY
Superintendent: Craig Stover

Inspection Date: 11/19/2008
Last Inspection Date: 1/9/2008

Address: 957 Forrest Gate Road
Campo, CA 91906

Telephone Number: (619) 401-3500
Fax: (619) 401-3512

Type of Facility: Juvenile Camp

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge:
Honorable Susan Huguenor

Staff Interviewed:

Dan Deleon, previous Facility Director
Keith Hicks, Administrative Supervisor
Dr. Nelson, Psychologist
Teacher's Assistant

Total Bed Capacity: 250
Currently 3 Dorm Capacity: 154
Population on inspection date: 152

Juvenile Justice Commission Chair:
Andrea Dixon

Commission Inspectors:
Fernando Soriano, Ph.D.
Kathleen K. Edwards, Ed.D.

Comments and Recommendations:

The Juvenile Ranch Facility is a juvenile institution, which provides a dormitory-style residential program for delinquent boys. The total capacity at the facility is 250 beds. The facility is divided with programming for two categories of offenders. There are two dormitories known as Rancho del Rayo, housing boys aged 12-16½, with an 84-day program focusing on substance abuse and Breaking the Cycle of Addictive Thinking. A separate area, known as Rancho Del Campo, focuses on older (aged 12 to 18 years) boys addressing short-term commitments, and a Breaking Cycles and a STOP (Short-Term Offender Program) component redirecting delinquent behavior focus.

The Juvenile Ranch Facility is administered by Dan Deleon. The San Diego County Office of Education administers the Rancho del Campo High School, certified Kindergarten through 12th Grade, and is attended by all wards at the Juvenile Ranch Facility. Medical and Mental Health services are provided by California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Parent involvement: due to funding cuts, bus service no longer runs to the JRF. Consider providing family services at or near the Juvenile Court facility in San Diego.
2. Evaluate needs of education staff for additional professional growth opportunities provided by County Office of Education. Provision of these services should be at the JRF site for staff convenience.
3. Recidivism at JRF was quoted at 33% which is admirable. Study needs to be done to evaluate what factors best contribute to this rate, for replication at other facilities.
4. Continuing care or case management of wards with significant mental health problems is an ongoing problem. Although all wards have access to a psychologist and psychiatrist at the Camp, this service is seldom available to wards on discharge. A program to allow time to transition current wards and JRF therapists to the next set of therapists could further reduce recidivism rates. Clinical care givers in the community could also have a better chance of involving families in therapy.
5. Persistence is needed to contact Fire Marshal for inspection. Fire inspection has occurred since the original writing of this document.

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AREA REVIEWED:

R= Reviewed NR=Not Reviewed I= Interviewed NI – Not Interviewed

QUALITY OF LIFE

Physical Plant - R
Meals/Nutrition - R
Mental Health - R
Physical/Dental Health - R
Religious Services - R
Volunteer Involvement - R
Visiting - R

PROGRAMS

Education - I
Vocation/Employability - R
Community Services - R
Victim/Gang Awareness - I
Substance Abuse I

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Minors - NI
Superintendent - I
Medical/Psych. Staff - I
School Staff – I
Supervisor - I
Supv. Staff (Counselors) - I
Food Services Staff - R

GENERAL INFORMATION

Has the facility exceeded capacity since the last inspection?

No. Total capacity, with all dorms at camp open, is 250 beds. County staff is constantly adjusting to the variable needs of the Juvenile Court. The physical location/acreage could support more buildings, but the location of the camp is not conducive to expansion. Existing buildings are adequate, but aging. The current capacity (154) seems well suited to the current programs and staffing.

Does the facility house minors under Section 601 Welfare & Institutions Code?

No: Juvenile Ranch Facility houses only §602 Welfare & Institutions Code offenders.

SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION INDICATE:

Number of Suicides: 0 **Number of Attempted Suicides:** 0
Number of Deaths from other causes: 0 **Number of Escapes:** 1 (3 wards, 2 captured)
Number of attempted escapes: 2.

Local Inspections: Fire Inspection: Feb 7, 2007 – as of inspection date, but inspection completed December '08.

Health-Environmental: March 2008

Health-Medical/MMH: March 2008

Date of Last Fire Drill: November, 2008

STAFFING

Staff to Child Ratio:

Awake hours ratio – 1 staff to 15 wards.
Sleeping hours ratio -- 1 staff representative for every 30 wards.

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Communication In Language Minor can Understand?

Since wards are 58% Latino, it is imperative that Spanish speaking staff and translated materials are available to staff. There is always a bilingual staff working to assist with communication/translation.

Diversity of Staff:

The camp setting appeared to enjoy a broad cultural and ethnic staff diversity.

Staff/Minor Interactions:

Staff/ward interactions were positive. Wards appeared compliant and engaged in activities

Staff Interviews – Comments:

It was obvious that the interviewed staff is confident and hopeful about the outcomes of the wards at JRF.

CONDITIONS OF GROUNDS

Lawns, Playing fields, Blacktop, Asphalt and Other:

The Juvenile Ranch Facility is located in the East County, which has mountainous topography, and experiences extreme summer and winter temperatures. In general, the facility has natural vegetation and has limited landscaping. The grounds afford space for playing fields, including a full-sized football field with natural grass. The pool is available to wards.

EXTERIOR OF BUILDINGS

General condition, paint, roof, drains/gutters and etc.:

The JRF buildings were built prior to WWII. Their condition appears in good repair. An emerging issue has been the fact that repairs and upgrades are significantly inhibited by the need to comply with the local Campo Historical Society's standards for historically accurate renovation.

INTERIOR OF BUILDINGS

Walls, paint, floors, drains, plumbing fixtures, air vents, windows, etc.:

Overall, the interior of all buildings reflected the well-worn, long-term use of the facilities. The Rancho del Rayo dorms, which are newer facilities, appeared to be in good overall condition. The older dorms of the Rancho del Campo area were also generally in good condition

Are cleaning fluids and chemicals labeled and safely stored?

Supplies are maintained in a secure building. Wards are not allowed to enter the building without staff supervision.

Weapons Locker Location:

Weapons lockers were not reviewed during this inspection.

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Recreation/Sports Equipment:

Interview with PE staff indicated adequate equipment and a broad diversity of sports activities.

Are the hallways clear and doors propped open?

Entrances, hallways, activity rooms and sleeping spaces appeared well maintained and free of obstructions.

Court Holding Area:

Not applicable to Juvenile Ranch Facility.

Sleeping rooms/dormitories:

Dormitories and sleeping rooms appeared to be properly maintained, with climate control and good ventilation.

Beds:

Some wards are assigned to bunk beds. The bottom bunks are a minimum of 12" above the floor. Although neat and tidy, blankets were worn and seemed inadequate for cold desert nights. A second blanket is available on request.

Art, books, personal possessions allowed in sleeping rooms?

A very limited amount of personal possessions are allowed in the dorms. The lockers had been removed in the Rancho del Campo dorms due to problems with contraband.

Graffiti Present?

Graffiti was generally not evident around the camp. The staff viewed graffiti as an unavoidable issue at the camp. However, graffiti occurring on areas other than windows is quickly removed or covered up.

Ample blankets?

Blankets seemed inadequate for cold desert nights. If cold, the wards may ask for a second blanket.

Study Area:

The library contained a modern computer lab and a diverse stock of books at a wide range of reading levels. Additional computers would be helpful.

Adequate Lighting?

All areas of the camp appeared to have adequate lighting.

Temperature:

The primary facility buildings, including all dormitories, are equipped with central air conditioning and forced air heating.

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ORIENTATION OF MINORS

Are minors oriented to rules and procedures?

Upon arrival to the facility, all minors are introduced to the policies, rules and procedures by administrative staff. Further orientation takes place during the intake procedure and when wards are assigned to dorms. Many of the policies, rules and goals of the facility are conspicuously posted in dorms and study areas.

Are rules and grievance procedures posted?

Yes, the facility recently adopted a new Grievance Form, which is available in all dorms, in well-marked dispensers. The grievance procedure is included in the orientation process.

Are rules and grievance procedures understood by minors?

All wards are well versed in the grievance procedure.

Minors Interviewed – Comments

No minors were interviewed during this inspection.

MEALS/NUTRITION

Kitchen – Clean; are knives and chemicals locked?

The kitchen area appeared clean and properly maintained. Knives and chemicals are secured by staff; wards are not left unsupervised in the kitchen area.

Have the youths working in the kitchen been trained?

All wards working in the kitchen complete a brief sanitation training course; wards are not left unsupervised in the kitchen area.

Are meals served or cafeteria style?

The kitchen layout provides cafeteria-style food dispensing in an area adjacent to the dining room hall. Wards utilize a tray to contain their food, and then move into the dining hall where they have assigned table seating. Tables generally seat six wards, three to each side; however, a few tables provide eight seats, four per side.

Are minors permitted to converse during meals?

There is a quiet time in effect when getting food and entering the dining area. After all are seated, staff will allow conversation at the table. Communications with wards from other dormitories is prohibited.

Is Staff present and supervising?

Inspection did not occur during meal time. Staff reported, however, that they are always present at meals.

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Is weekly menu prepared? Is it posted?

Menus are prepared by a Certified Nutritionist who oversees general menus as well as special diets for medical purposes. The program is contracted out to the Sheriff's Food Services Unit.

Are servings ample, nutritious and appetizing?

This inspection did not occur during meal time.

Length of time allowed for eating?

Normal mealtime is twenty minutes, which appears to be sufficient time to complete the meal.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF MINORS

Appearance?

All wards observed had proper appearance; the clothing appeared clean and free of excessive worn spots, rips, tear and etc. Rules require wards to maintain certain standards, such as no excessive blousing of shirts, pants not too low on the hip, etc.

Showers – Frequency? Privacy maintained? Supervised by Staff? Any assaults in showers?

Showers are present in the dormitory areas for all wards. Shower facilities are communal, with minimal privacy for the individual. The reduced privacy allows staff adequate monitoring. The shower areas, were well maintained, clean and dry.

Condition of clothing – Does clothing fit? Is it appropriate to weather?

All wards appeared to have clean, well-maintained clothing. Wards from the dorm with the most positive behavior are allowed to wear collared golf-type shirts.

PROGRAMS

Recreation/Exercise – types and amount each day.

Every ward is provided a minimum of three hours of recreation per day. Wards receive one hour during school hours, a second hour during the afternoon period, and a third after evening showers. There is generally more recreational time spent on weekends.

Access to Religious Services?

The camp still struggles to provide a wide breadth of religious services. However, Catholic services are held at the camp every other Monday. Also, every other Thursday a deacon is available for some one-to-one counseling.

Medical/Mental Health Services

Medical and Mental Health services are provided by California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG). A medical doctor is available on-site 1-2 days a week. Mr. Hicks noted that only a small number of the wards are taking prescribed psychotropic medications compared to the number at Juvenile Hall or East Mesa. Psychology staff are available on site one day a week and "Telepsych" videoconferencing is available for wards to consult with the physician at Juvenile Hall for medication management.

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Volunteer Program:

The camp has had difficulty getting volunteers due to its remote location. Staff expressed that if more volunteers were available, the camp would be best served by those who have had some counseling experience and could "relate to the kids." College students would seem ideal for this volunteer work.

Counseling and Casework:

Currently, there are 4-5 dorm staff daily in each dorm at JRF; 1 full-time Psychologist; 2 Phoenix House counselors, and 1 MITE counselor and 2 Breaking Cycles counselors in the Rancho del Rayo program.

Rancho del Rayo Programming:

Rancho del Rayo programs include community programming provided by Phoenix House Staff, a non-profit drug treatment organization operating "Therapeutic Communities" in New England, Florida, Texas and California. Therapeutic Community (TC) is defined as a community whose structure, daily activities, and interaction of its members are designed to promote personal change in its participants. The TC is geared to help members develop the skills needed for recovery, generally through organized seminars, group meetings and observed individual participation. In addition to the Phoenix House programming, Rancho del Rayo provides AA/NA meetings, the McAlister Institute for Treatment and Education, and a 12-week Drug Counseling program. Wards assigned to Rancho del Rayo also participate in programs designed to encourage wards to train and motivate by example, such as the White Hat program, the highest level of recognition a ward can attain. The camp also has a "top dorm" program, which is used as an incentive for all kids in each dorm. The top dorm is calculated by looking at the number of school "kick-outs," dorm cleanliness, and failed days in the program for the entire dorm. The winning dorm gets an ice cream or nacho party and each member of the dorm gets one day taken off their sentence.

Rancho del Campo Programming:

Rancho del Campo programs, Breaking Cycles, and a STOP (Short-Term Offender Program) redirecting delinquent behavior focus. Specific programs include the Pillars of Character; Aggression Replacement Therapy; Drug/Alcohol Counseling; Literacy Program. All programs include full attendance at Rancho del Campo High School, Psychological Counseling, Wards Encourage each Day to Succeed Program, Character Counts, Church Services, and Random Drug testing.

DISCIPLINE OF MINORS

Frequency and type:

Three (3) levels of discipline are employed at the Juvenile Ranch Facility. Lowest Level: Verbal – not documented; Mid Level: Mark Down – recorded and may result in loss of points/privileges or Rule Violation (RV) may result in additional days at JRF for violating major rules; Highest Level – Termination from facility. At all levels of discipline, the staff is oriented to try to resolve the issue if possible. Escalating the discipline to higher levels is considered a final option.

Number and Type:

Most of the infractions occurring at the camp are minor and can be addressed through verbal correction. Terminations were typically related to escape attempts or assaultive/combative behavior. Administrative removals from the camp occurred sporadically and are not a regular occurrence at the camp.

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TELEPHONE

Access:

There is a payphone and a free phone located in the dormitories and wards are encouraged to make a minimum of a weekly call to home. Use of the free telephone is provided as a reward for good behavior and wards are frequently allowed brief, 5-minute phone calls during evening hours.

CORRESPONDENCE

Is Postage Free? Is incoming and/or outgoing mail read? Is there confidential correspondence?

Incoming mail is scanned for contraband and obvious content related to any illegal activity. Envelopes are removed from the letters. Staff allows as much confidentiality as possible to correspondence by the wards. Envelopes, paper, and postage are free.

VISITING

Is there adequate space, convenient times or accommodations to parent work schedule, etc. special visits? Does staff supervise visits? Is there adequate privacy?

Visitation is normally held in an outdoor picnic area. Staff oversees the visiting. Visitors are not permitted to give presents or any material to wards. The visiting hours are normally on Sunday afternoons, between noon and 3 p.m.

Have all minors had visits?

It is difficult for families to visit the facility due to gas costs and transportation issues. A bus previously was available from San Diego for families, but this was discontinued.

SCHOOL

Teachers – Number of full-time; frequency of substitutions.

School staff is as follows: Principal (1); Secretaries (2); Registrars (3); Teachers (10); Teachers Aides (6); Instructional Aides (1); Student Support Specialist (1); Parent Liaison (1); Counselor (1).

Number of minors in school/per classroom.

All minors at JRF attend school. The only acceptable reason for missing class would be medical issues, court-related appearance and, on infrequent occasions, wards assigned to special duties (kitchen, etc) may miss some classroom time. Classroom size varies based on population; the typical classroom size is 10-15 students.

Number of Minors on independent study:

There is no independent study program at the JRF. Class attendance is mandatory. Class size is small enough that a great deal of individual focus is possible. It would be beneficial to high school students to have an online curriculum for English, Math, Science, Government, Econ and Foreign Language so that high school students can complete a diploma on return to home school.

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Atmosphere of classroom:

On the date of inspection, students were observed in the testing area taking a diagnostic/prescriptive test for English and Math Placement. Class instructional periods average 50 minutes and classes are conducted five days a week between 8:00 a.m. and 2:35 p.m.

Adequate Supplies? Books, paper, computers, etc.

School supplies appeared to be adequate. Some software updates for writing would benefit emerging writers.

Activities and coursework:

Class curriculum covers Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Science (Physical and Life), Social Science (History, Economics, and Civics), Physical Education, GED Preparation, and Computer applications. Additional tutoring is available for passing the California High School Exit Exam.

Are minors required to do homework?

A small amount of homework is required.

Relationship between school and probation staff.

The school/probation staff work closely for the benefit of the wards. The administrative supervisor of the camp meets with the school staff weekly.

/end